

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 00700 160200Z
ACTION EA-12

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INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0700

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PINR CH
SUBJ: CHAIRMEN TENG AND YEH

REF: A) HONG KONG 3186, B) HONG KONG 3001

1. SUMMARY: IN THE INTEREST OF FURTHERING THE ANALYTICAL DIALECTIC BETWEEN HONG KONG, PEKING AND WASHINGTON, USLO WOULD LIKE TO TAKE MILD ISSUE WITH TWO RECENT THESES PUT FORWARD IN REFTELS. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT TENG HSIAO-PING ACHIEVED A "PERSONAL TRIUMPH" WITH HIS APPOINTMENT AS CHAIRMAN OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE CONGRESS OR THAT YEH CHIEN-YING HAS BEEN "KICKED UPSTAIRS" AS CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS. END SUMMARY.

2. USLO WOULD AGREE WITH ASSESSMENT IN REF A THAT TENG HSIAO-PING'S NOMINATION AS CHAIRMAN OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE WAS A SYMBOLIC ACT. HOWEVER, WE CANNOT GO ALONG WITH THE CONCLUSION THAT HIS CHAIRMANSHIP OF THIS PERIPHERAL GROUP OF AGING UNITED FRONT FLACKS IS A "PERSONAL TRIUMPH" ADDING TO HIS POWER BASE. IN NAMING A POWERFUL MAN TO BE TITULAR HEAD OF A WORTHY
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PAGE 02 PEKING 00700 160200Z

CAUSE PRC LEADERS HAVE DONE SOMETHING ANALOGOUS TO MAKING FDR HEAD OF THE MARCH OF DINES. WHILE THE APPOINTMENT MIGHT PUT TENG ON SOME THEORETICAL POLITICAL PAR WITH HUA KUO-FENG AND YEH CHIEN-YING IN THEIR ROLES AS CHAIRMEN OF THE CCP AND THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS, IT IS NOT BEING PLAYED THAT WAY BY THE CHINESE MEDIA. PEKING RADIO AND TELEVISION PAID LITTLE ATTENTION TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT

OF TENG'S APPOINTMENT AND THE CONCLUSION OF THE CPPCC.
HIS ROLE AS CHAIRMAN WAS NOT HIGHLIGHTED AND THE TEXT OF
HIS ADDRESS HAS NOT BEEN PUBLISHED.

3. REAL AUTHORITY ON UNITED FRONT ACTIVITIES, AN AREA
WHICH HAS OBVIOUSLY GAINED SIGNIFICANCE AS THE PRC AGAIN
BECOMES MORE EXTROVERTED, WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO BE
IN THE HANDS OF SEVERAL PARTY UNITS: THE UNITED FRONT
WORK DEPARTMENT, THE SEMI-SECRET OVERSEAS CHINESE AFFAIRS
OFFICE, AND, TO SOME EXTENT, THE INTERNATIONAL LIAISON
OFFICE. INsofar AS "UNITED FRONT ACTIVITIES" ARE CONSTRUED
TO INCLUDE ALL OF CHINA'S CULTURAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNO-
LOGICAL FOREIGN CONTACTS, TENG WOULD SEEM TO HAVE ALREADY
ADEQUATE CONTROL IN THIS FIELD THROUGH SUCH ASSOCIATES AS
FANG YI AND HU CHIAO-MU.

4. TENG'S POWER WILL CONTINUE TO STEM FROM AUTHORITY OVER
THE NATIONAL EFFORT TO MODERNIZE THE ECONOMY AND THE MILITARY
AND HIS INFLUENCE CONTROL OVER THE PARTY ORGANIZATION.
ALTHOUGH HE WAS VERY MUCH IN THE BACKGROUND DURING
THE NPC NO ONE SEEMS TO THINK THAT HIS REAL INFLUENCE HAS
DIMINISHED AT ALL.

5. IF TENG'S "ASCENSION" TO THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE CPPCC
IS TO BE LOOKED UPON AS A PERSONAL TRIUMPH, IT IS HARD TO SEE
HOW YEH CHIEN-GING COULD BE CONSIDERED AS HAVING BEEN
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PAGE 03 PEKING 00700 160200Z

"KICKED UPSTAIRS" BY BEING NAMED CHAIRMAN OF THE NPC, A
MUCH MORE SUBSTANTIAL ORGANIZATION. GRANTED THAT YEH'S
NEW JOB WILL BE LESS DEMANDING THAN RUNNING THE DEFENSE
MINISTRY, THE NPC CHAIRMANSHIP PLUS HIS POSITION AS VICE
CHAIRMAN OF THE CCP WOULD SEEM TO LEAVE HIM EXCELLENT
PLACEMENT TO CONTINUE TO PROJECT HIS STABILIZING INFLUENCE
ON THE REST OF THE LEADERSHIP.

6. WE DO NOT BELIEVE, EITHER, THAT A "YEH-TENG" DICHOTOMY
HAS CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO LEADERSHIP TENSION IN
RECENT MONTHS. WHILE YEH PROBABLY DID NOT AGREE WITH AS
RAPID OR THOROUGH A RECTIFICATION AS TENG MIGHT HAVE
DESIRED, THE TWO HAVE A LONG, CLOSE AND WELL-DOCUMENTED
ASSOCIATION. YEH SUPPORTED TENG AGAINST THE GANG OF
FOUR, REFUSED TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST
HIM AND PROBABLY WAS THE ARCHITECT OF LOHE 1977
COMPROMISE WHICH BROUGHT TENG BACK. YEH'S GRADUAL WITH-
DRAWAL FROM ACTIVE DAY-TO-DAY PARTICIPATION IN THE EXECUTION
OF POLICY PROBABLY WAS ALREADY UNDERWAY AT THE 1975
MILITARY AFFAIRS MEETING WHEN TENG BEGAN TO FILL THE ROLE
FORMERLY PLAYED BY THE AGING MARSHAL. THERE DOES NOT SEEM TO
HAVE BEEN ANY DISCONTINUITY IN MILITARY POLICY ASSOCIATED

WITH THIS EVOLUTION OR ANY MARKED CHANGE IN THE KIND OF
PLA VETERANS RECEIVING HIGH LEVEL APPOINTMENTS. THESE WOULD SEEM
TO BE EXEMPLIFIED BY HSU HSIANG-CHIEN, A PRESTIGIOUS OLDTIMER
ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH YEH AND TENG.
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